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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/625,967	07/24/2003	James E. Issler	03820-P0094A	1638
24126	7590	07/02/2004	EXAMINER	
ST. ONGE STEWARD JOHNSTON & REENS, LLC 986 BEDFORD STREET STAMFORD, CT 06905-5619			BRITTAJN, JAMES R	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
		3677		

DATE MAILED: 07/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/625,967	ISSLER, JAMES E.
Examiner	Art Unit	
James R. Brittain	3677	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-6,9-13 and 16-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 7,8,14 and 15 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 24 July 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 07242003
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION***Drawing Objections***

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the holder for the lace being a hook (claim 3) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification Objections

The specification is objected to because of the following minor informalities: Applicant refers to patents in sections [0006] through [0008] by inventor name. Because many inventor names are associated with numerous patents from different fields applicant must insert the patent numbers so as to provide a clear indication of the prior art applicant is describing. The description “aperture 30” ([0032], line 6) utilizes the wrong reference numeral and --16-- is suggested. Correction is required.

The abstract is objected to because of the use of the legal term “invention” (line 1), which is improper in the abstract. The abstract should be a brief summary of the technical disclosure and not use legal terms such as “invention”, “means” or “said”. Correction is required.

The use of the term “loop” (claim 4, line 2) and “hook” (claim 3), while nominally recited in the Summary of the Invention [0014], there is no reference to these terms in the

Detailed Description of the Drawings so that it is clear via the use of reference numeral what these terms refer to. Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. This claim states that the "holder is a hook". However, applicant has not shown or described what the configuration of the hook comprises so as to enable one having ordinary skill in the art to make the hook.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11-13, 16, and 18 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Liu (US 6568104).

Liu (figures 10, 11) teaches a lacing system, comprising: a clasp 30' having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace; the anchoring end having a first part and

a second part in the form of resilient legs 332' terminating in hook ends 331' where the first and second parts are movable away from and toward one another; a receiver 40' having a first receptacle and a second receptacle each being a fastener hole 422' for, engaging the first and second parts, respectively; and wherein the clasp is removably joinable to the receiver when the first and second parts are engaged with the first and second receptacles and, when the first and second parts are disengaged with the first and second receptacles, the clasp is separable from the receiver. As to claims 2 and 4, the eyelets 32' comprise loops. In regard to claim 6, the receiver 40' is considered to be a shaft having lateral ends with openings 422' therethrough that are considered to be bored ends. As to claim 9, the receiver 40' is secured to a side of an aperture on the shoe to be closed.

In regard to claim 11, Liu (figures 10, 11) teaches a method for providing an improved lacing system, comprising the steps of: providing a clasp 30' having a receiver end and a lace end; extending a first part and a second part in the form of resilient legs 332' terminating in hook ends 331' from the receiver end; extending a holder in the form of eyelets 32' forming a loop from the lace end; providing a receiver 40' having a first receptacle and a second receptacle each being a fastener hole 422' for receiving the first and second parts, respectively; and wherein the clasp is removably joinable to the receiver for closing an item and the clasp is separable from the receiver for opening the item. As to claims 12 and 13, the steps of engaging the first and second parts with the first and second receptacles removably joins the clasp and receiver of Liu and disengaging the first and second parts with the first and second receptacles separates the clasp from the receiver of Liu. As to claim 16, the receiver 40' is secured to a side of an aperture on

the shoe to be closed. In regard to claim 18, a lace is obviously passed through the loops of the clasp of Liu.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu (US 6568104) in view of Raymond (US 449273).

Liu (figures 10, 11) teaches a lacing system, comprising: a clasp 30' having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace; the anchoring end having a first part and a second part in the form of resilient legs 332' terminating in hook ends 331' where the first and second parts are movable away from and toward one another; a receiver 40' having a first receptacle and a second receptacle each being a fastener hole 422' for, engaging the first and second parts, respectively; and wherein the clasp is removably joinable to the receiver when the first and second parts are engaged with the first and second receptacles and, when the first and second parts are disengaged with the first and second receptacles, the clasp is separable from the receiver. The difference is that the holder is a loop not a hook. However, Raymond (figures 1, 15) teaches that hooks are well known equivalents to the use of loops for lacing and provide the added advantage of easier release. As there are circumstances where it would be desirable to make the release of the lace even easier in the device of Liu, it would have been obvious to

modify the lace fastener of Liu so that a hook is used rather than a loop to hold the lace as taught by Raymond.

Claims 10 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu (US 6568104) in view of Weber et al. (US 6240657).

Liu (figures 10, 11) teaches a lacing system, comprising: a clasp 30' having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace; the anchoring end having a first part and a second part in the form of resilient legs 332' terminating in hook ends 331' where the first and second parts are movable away from and toward one another; a receiver 40' having a first receptacle and a second receptacle each being a fastener hole 422' for, engaging the first and second parts, respectively; and wherein the clasp is removably joinable to the receiver when the first and second parts are engaged with the first and second receptacles and, when the first and second parts are disengaged with the first and second receptacles, the clasp is separable from the receiver. The difference is that the receiver is not secured to an eyelet of the shoe. However, Weber et al. (figures 7, 8) teaches securing the receiver 59, 60, 69 to the eyelet of the shoe so as to permit the device to be readily used on common shoe structure. As it would be advantageous to readily use the device of Liu on common shoe structure without modification of the shoe, it would have been obvious to modify the device of Liu so that the receiver is secured to an eyelet of the shoe as taught by Weber et al. (figures 7, 8) to be desirable.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu (US 6568104) in view of Krauss (US 5379496).

Liu (figures 10, 11) teaches a lacing system, comprising: a clasp 30' having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace; the anchoring end having a first part and

a second part in the form of resilient legs 332' terminating in hook ends 331' where the first and second parts are movable away from and toward one another; a receiver 40' having a first receptacle and a second receptacle each being a fastener hole 422' for, engaging the first and second parts, respectively; and wherein the clasp is removably joinable to the receiver when the first and second parts are engaged with the first and second receptacles and, when the first and second parts are disengaged with the first and second receptacles, the clasp is separable from the receiver. The difference is that the receiver is not cylindrical in shape. However, Krauss (figures 1, 2, 16, 17) teaches that a cylindrical shape is well known, and applicant is reminded that changes in shape have been found obvious absent evidence that the particular configuration is significant. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). It would have been obvious to modify the shape so that the device of Liu is cylindrical in view of Krauss teaching such a shape as being desirable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

The patents of Gould (US 5109581, figure 4), Veylupek (US 5755044, figures 5, 6), Johnston (US 835068, figures 2, 4), Chisholm (US 1548407, figures 1-3), Tallarico (US 2913793, figure 1), Puthuff (US 3197833, figures 2, 6, 7), Almy (US 888454, figures 8, 9), and De Loureiro Lima (WO 97/40718, figures 1-11) teach pertinent lace guiding structure.

Art Unit: 3677

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James R. Brittain whose telephone number is 703-308-2222. The examiner can normally be reached on M, W & F 5:30-1:30, T 5:30-2:00 & TH 5:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, J. J. Swann can be reached on 703-306-4115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



James R. Brittain
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3677

JRB